

## **SALÓN GOURMETS ANNOUNCES SPAIN'S BEST SOMMELIER, BEST PIZZA CHEF AND BEST GRILL CHEF ON ITS FINAL DAY**

Diego Tornel, of the Canary Islands Sommeliers' Association, has been crowned Spain's Best Sommelier at the 31st Tierra de Sabor Spanish Sommelier Championship, co-sponsored by Bodegas Avelino Vegas, and will represent Spain at the ASI (Association de la Sommellerie Internationale) World Sommelier Championship

Furthermore, today, the 5th Spanish Gourmet Pizza Championship announced the winners of the team triathlon category and the best pizza chef, a title awarded to Mauro Dávila

Meanwhile, Javier Jerez, from the restaurant Es Parc de Mallorca, has claimed victory in the 1st IRUKI Grill Challenge by Embajadores, a new competition making its debut this year at Salón Gourmets



**Madrid, 16 April 2026.**– The final day of Salón Gourmets (SG) saw some of the most prominent figures on the national gastronomic scene take centre stage, with the staging of three of its most eagerly awaited competitions: the 31st Tierra de Sabor Spanish Sommelier Championship, the 5th Spanish Gourmet Pizza Championship and the new IRUKI Parrilla Challenge by Embajadores.

### **BEST SOMMELIER IN SPAIN 2026**

Diego Tornel, from the Canary Islands Sommeliers' Association, has been crowned Best Sommelier in Spain at the 31st Tierra de Sabor Spanish Sommelier Championship, one of the most established

competitions in the sector. Organised under the patronage of Tierra de Sabor and co-sponsored by Avelino Vegas, the competition aims to promote and spread the culture of sommelierism in Spain. The championship consisted of two stages: the semi-final held on Wednesday 15 April and the final held this morning before a jury of recognised prestige, including Custodio López Zamarra and Rafa Bellido (president of UAES). As the winner, Diego Tornel will represent Spain at the World Sommelier Championship organised by the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI). Meanwhile, Davide Dall'Amico, from the Basque Country Sommelier Association, took second place, whilst third place went to Toni Albiol, from the Catalan Sommelier Association.

### **THE BEST PIZZAS AND THE BEST PIZZA CHEF IN SPAIN**

The 5th Spanish Gourmet Pizza Championship has once again highlighted the talent of the country's pizza chefs, recognising the winners of the team triathlon category and crowning Mauro Dávila as Spain's Best Pizza Chef.

The event, organised by Jesús Marquina —known as “Il Dottore Marquinetti”— in collaboration with the Spanish Association of Artisan Pizza Makers (AEPA) and Grupo Gourmets, took place over the four days of the fair with a packed programme of activities. In addition to the competition, the championship featured masterclasses, acrobatic displays and demonstrations across the various categories: classic, peel, taglio, Neapolitan (classic and contemporary), gluten-free, più larga, Argentine, speed and acrobatics. As a new feature, this edition introduced the team triathlon category, reinforcing the dynamic and participatory nature of the competition.

These were the winners:

#### **Classic Pizza**

- 1º: Gennaro Arrichiello
- 2º: Giuseppe Paciello
- 3º: Raul Rodríguez Rodríguez

#### **Pizza Pala**

- 1º: Antón Belmonte
- 2º: Mauro Davila
- 3º: Luigi Citro

#### **Pizza Taglio**

- 1º: Marius Dragu
- 2º: Sergio Nicolae Iftodi
- 3º: Sabrina Selva

#### **Classic Neapolitan Pizza**

- 1º: Gennaro Arrichiello
- 2º: Mario Vicedomini
- 3º: Toni Rodríguez Alijarte

#### **Contemporary Neapolitan Pizza**

- 1º: Antón Belmonte
- 2º: Marco Giornetti
- 3º: Francesco Lapadula

#### **Argentinian Pizza**

- 1º: Sebastián Cortez
- 2º: Raul Rodriguez
- 3º: Matías De la Maza

#### **Gluten-free pizza**

- 1º: Mauro Dávila
- 2º: Eduardo Ramirez Trancoso
- 3º: Cosmin Padureanu Iulian

#### **Larger Pizza**

- 1º: Andrés Tul
- 2º: Marius Dragu
- 3º: Santi Ortiz Morocho

#### **Speed**

- 1º: Andrés Tul
- 2º: Marius Dragu
- 3º: Luigi Citro

#### **Acrobatics**

- 1º: Andrés Tul
- 2º: Luigi Citro

#### **Triatlón por equipos**

- Vulcano Team

Once again, leading brands have added flavour to this competition: Negrini Robo, the leading importer and distributor of Italian food and wine, has provided the tomatoes for the pizza bases; 5 Stagioni, a leading producer of premium-quality flour, has offered contestants preparing their dough on the spot a wide variety of wheat flours; and the dairy company Albe has provided its mozzarella.

### **MEAT TAKES CENTRE STAGE: THE FIRST GRILL CHALLENGE**

Among the new features of this edition, Salón Gourmets hosted the 1st IRUKI Grill Challenge by Embajadores, a competition paying tribute to the art of fire with a contemporary twist. In this new format, technique, produce and creativity took centre stage in a gastronomic spectacle that brought together some of the country's finest grill chefs. The winner, Javier Jerez, from the restaurant Es Parc in Selva (Mallorca), faced a demanding jury comprising Jon Gorostiaga, president of Grupo Embajadores; Tomás Écija, chef and owner of La Maita and El Albero; Gonzalo Armas, chef at Carbón Negro; Osvaldo González, chef at Los 33; Javier Brichetto, chef and CEO of Piantao; and Elma Fernández, from Carnívora Gourmet, who assessed the entries based on criteria such as technique, handling of the produce and creativity. Organised by IRUKI —a firm specialising in beef with production facilities in Astigarraga, Vitoria and Madrid— and co-sponsored by Parrillas Gresilva —sustainable and innovative thanks to their lateral heat distribution system—, this new competition aims to establish itself as one of the highlights of the event.

### **SABOR GRANADA: PRODUCTS, REGION AND TALENT**

The event also featured Sabor Granada, a brand promoted by the Provincial Council of Granada, which showcased the richness and diversity of its produce through a comprehensive programme of activities. With over 350 member companies, the project supports producers, agri-food businesses and establishments linked to the region, highlighting everything from subtropical produce to high-mountain specialities. Throughout the day, chefs such as Lola Marín from the Damasqueros restaurant, Juan Pedro Ortiz from Trescero, Periko Ortega from Nervio by Periko Ortega, Javier Feixas from Ruta del Azafrán, and Raúl Sierra from Atelier Casa de Comidas offered various culinary demonstrations accompanied by wines from the province, in a journey that brought together tradition, produce and creativity.

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